

Instances of Excellence

Detroit VA Healthcare System



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

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The “Instances of Excellence” program stems from a belief that employees must do the right thing, the first time, every time. Our program establishes a system of recognizing and celebrating those Instances of Excellence in the hope of fostering a culture that is dedicated to excellence in customer service and patient care.

Instances of Excellence Report from Veterans

- **Latonya Tolbert** - Domiciliary - “Helps veterans with concerns, has compassion for residents, always friendly and courteous.”
- **Tonya Randolph** - Domiciliary - “Looks out for veterans. Makes sure we get medication on time. She is very pleasant.”
- **Erica Duncan** - Domiciliary - “Erica always provides excellence in all areas. She's kind, considerate, pays close attention to details.”
- **Susan Spencer** - “Susan Spencer is a very dedicated person to her job. She picks up fellow veterans. She just doesn't stop there. Her service at the community Resources Building. She is dedicated. She always has a real positive attitude. Hard driven. Works well under pressure. You need a couple more like her.”
- **Ralph Riggs** - Mental Health - “Attended substance use treatment group counseling led by Mr. Ralph Riggs. Very effective in helping to overcome any issues I may have had concerning this.”
- **Mark Aturi** - Anesthesiology - “First surgery on my hand and I was nervous. Surgeon was good and everyone says and he is but the anesthesia was great and Mark (Veteran) helped me relax and talked to me and my girl. He is great. We need more like him.”
- **Margaret Underwood** - A5N - “My two month stay (thru 5 procedures) on A5N I consistently requested Margaret be assigned as my nurse due to her professionalism, technical competency, compassion and true desire to do the right thing, whether it be medication time, therapy time or appointment time, Margaret was always on top of things without having to be told or reminded. She truly believes that the patient is the high priority and is a wonderful standard bearer for the Dingell Medical Center.”
- **Ivy Williams** - “Service is better than ever. - Thank you. Thank you.”
- **Ivy Williams** - Care Team E - “Yes. Her work or job is very excellent to me. Thank you.”
- **Thompson** - “She is very respectful. She knows and does her job with pride. Listening to her on the phone, she puts people to the proper department that fits their needs.”
- **Care Team C / Audiology** - “Everyone was friendly & helpful. Not just to me, but everyone was given a smile and a welcome. People everywhere smiled and offered help.”
- **All Over** - “My experiences have always been great! Smooth with friendly and courteous staff, medical and non-medical - keep up the great work!”
- **Youli Ava Piscopo** - A5S - “Youli is very professional and takes her work very seriously. When she was my nurse she made me feel much better with her pleasing smile and personable attitude.”
- **Youli** - A5S - “You need more nurses like this one. She expresses a genuine concern for her patients. She's very professional and pleasant to be around. She is the definition of excellence. (Added note: Excellence in "People Skills") - She gives 100% in what she does for the VA hospital.”

Instances of Excellence

- **Chris Herman** - Care Team C - "The experience was very good. Very prompt and thorough care. - Dr. Chris is very concerned about his patients."
- **Chris Herman** - Care Team C - "Chris was very knowledgeable and helpful. I'm fully satisfied with my care."
- **Chris Herman** - Care Team C - "Professional, articulate, knowledgeable."
- **Yolanda** - Orthopedics - "Yolanda was very understanding and took time to look up my appt. and what was going on with the schedule. She was fun to talk to and very nice, which was great. She completely transformed my opinion of VA, after having some other bad experience."
- **Bui Melanie** - Dermatology - "Last week I visited the Dermatology Clinic for my twice yearly Exam and Treatment. The People there are all very pleasant and professional from the Receptionists to the Doctors. Dr. Peoples seems to be on top of everything! But I am writing to visit on the subject of a New Resident who saw me last week. Dr. Melanie R. Bui MD/PhD really impressed me. She is very professional, articulate and knowledgeable. I am sure she is headed for a stellar career! Veterans are very fortunate in having her services even if for just a term of Residency."
- **Oliva Siranni** - Care Team A - "A person that needs recognition beyond all is Nurse Oliva Siranni who works with team A3 with Dr Kavuru. For the past year or longer, Olivia has helped me thru so many problems, medications and support working thru secure msg and my main contact to Dr Kavuru. She has gone over and beyond to help and continues to help. She deserves so much recognition I could go on forever about the kind, patient, caring nurse she is...she would be my nurse of the year award. Please give her the recognition she deserves so well!!! Thank you VA for having Olivia on your staff!"
- **Tomeka Ricomstraict** - Neurology - "I contacted the Neurology department today and had the best service over the phone with Tomeka Ricomstraict, she helped me so much and deserves recognition. The VA needs more people like her helping Vets with such a positive responses and being very caring."
- **Lenora** - "When I first got here, I went to emergency where she stayed there with me for support. I couldn't believe she said "I will stay here until you are finished." She showed me concern for my health and well-being. - She went beyond the call of duty."
- **Erica** - "When I needed to get my personal things from another place, she was very supportive of being there. She showed me that there was concern about me. - She went beyond the call of duty."
- **Carmen** - "Her help felt sincere."
- **Adler** - Pain Clinic - "I had an appointment at the VA in Detroit recently, and was able to get a walk in appointment with Dr. Adler in Pain Management. I have been working with Dr. Adler on pain management for years, and he has always been an outstanding provider. He listens, he remembers and he always treats my concerns with dignity and professionalism. I am using acupuncture for pain management in tandem with pain medication and Dr. Adler, as always, has engaged in conversations about alternative care without making me feel like alternative ways to treat pain is a waste of time. There are few doctors within and outside of the VA who encourage those under their care to explore other options and integrate them with VA protocol. Bravo Dr. A!"
- **Youli** - A5S - "Shows respect to patients. Very good patient care."
- **Shelly** - Domiciliary - "Ms. Shelly on a daily basis sets aside her time and own welfare to ensure not only the health of the Domicile residents, but to ensure all residents are where they need to be...when they need to there often at a cost monetarily or her own needs. It's my(as well as many others) opinion that the program would fall apart without her dedication and compassion for the welfare of us homeless veterans residing at the Domicile, which reflects great Honor and Respect to Herself, the Veterans Administration, and the United State Government. I will never forget the above mentioned for their aide at this difficult time in my life. Thank you all."

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- **Christine Peterson** - Telephone Triage – “My thanks to the personnel at triage for handling my medicine refillings.” “Only name I remember is **Chris** but thank you to all.
- **Deborah Mctyre** - - “Her help was great. Better than any. She's big on help. Her help is seen much and she did all for me. Thank you to her. - If ever there was there was all my love.
- **Care Team C** - I am a 100% disabled Viet Nam Vet separated from active duty in 1968. I did not enroll in VA until 2013 because I had excellent private insurance from my employment. I had always heard that VA was slow, cumbersome with indifferent and mediocre care. My experience has been opposite. My team (C-4, Hermann, Caretti, Trudy, Bravo) have, in my experience, been magnificent. They have all been very professional, responsive and diligent in attending to my problems. They respond to inquiries quickly and effectively, directing and facilitating necessary follow-ups and appointments. The pharmacy operation has been



super(although they do not carry all of my medications). The 24-7 access to my medical records allows unprecedented coordination between VA and my non VA physicians. VA is the best!”

- **Olivia Sirianni** - Care Team A-PCS Nursing – “In May 2012 I came in for my first annual examination and then met Nurse Olivia of Team A, who told me she would coordinate activity on all my medical needs. She discussed in detail the procedure I would be using to claim for loss of hearing, advised me how to get prescriptions filled, and patiently answered questions that concerned me.

She also gave me a phone number where I could contact her at any time. It was immediately obvious to me that I could count on her whenever I needed it, and she gave me that help in full measure since our first meeting.” - Ms. Sirianni's care was further described as "warm" & "loving"! The support and care coordination / management provided assisted the veteran, Mr. Swedlow, with a "better quality of life." - his words!

Instances of Excellence Report from Employees

- **Samantha Ramnuth** MSD – “No matter what we ask, Samantha always gets the item or finds out what or who we need to get them.”
- **Melva J. Smith** - Call Center
- **Security (VA Police)** – “Afternoon shift, July 12 and July 15, 2013. In separate incident, I observed members of the VA Police demonstrate a high level of professional conduct and decorum in dealing with two mentally ill individuals. On July 12, 2013 I observed VA Police who were called to the ED to assist with a mentally ill veteran who was verbally loud and threatening with a cane. The first VA Police Officer took time to establish rapport with the veteran and calm him down. Unfortunately, due to his medical and mental health condition the veteran escalated during further investigation. All responding VA Police Officers calmly worked together to re-direct the agitated veteran to a gurney for further medical intervention while the veteran was verbally threatening and abusive. The VA Officers resolved the situation quickly and professionally. On July 15, 2013, I again observed VA Police called to the ED to assist with a veteran who walked out the back door of the ED. VA Police calmly walked the veteran back to the ED where he continued to yell at everyone in the ED. VA Police again calmly assisted in restraining the veteran so his medical and mental health issue could be peacefully resolved. In both incidents, I observed all law enforcement officers display discipline, tactfulness and leadership in dealing with and ultimately resolving these situations.”

Instances of Excellence

- **Samantha Ramnouth** - Cath Lab – “During the transition to new tubing we were out of CO2 monitoring tubing. We had a patient on the table when we called Sam to see if any could be located. Sam went out of her way to gather a few CO2 tubings, even though they were not in supply. Anytime we need something, Sam goes above & beyond to ensure we have it. We appreciate her commitment, attitude and efficiency.”
- **Samantha Ramnouth** - Chemotherapy – “She has been very helpful getting supplies in the different areas that I have been assigned. Hemodialysis, Radiology, Oncology, and Chemotherapy - Keeps supply room in order and always delivers extra supplies when needed.”
- **Samantha Ramnouth** - Chemotherapy – “She is very personable and dependable and communicates to meet our needs regularly.”
- **Samantha Ramnouth** - Chemotherapy – “Sam does an amazing job making sure all of our stock is available. She has a magnificent personality and is a pleasure to deal with.”
- **Diana Kersog RN** - Operating Room (OR) – “RN 1st Assistant in OP. Great team player. Great leader. Very professional, AND MORE!!”
- **Jackie Ford** - Operating Room (OR) – “Clinical Application Coordinator for surgery and primary care. Ms. Ford was efficient and very thorough and fast when asked if she could implement a quick order set for Primary Care. - The response to completion time was so fast. Ms. Tonnica Armstrong initiated the request.”
- **Sara A. Smith RN** - Home health Care – “Veterans relay how compassionate she is. Team Shapero is appreciative of her clinical assessments, willingness to go the extra mile, ability to keep team informed, and her professionalism.”
- **Kelly Dorsette** – “While taking a break on the blue side of the building, one of the care transport vans was removing a patient with a lift when the patient fell. Mr. Dorsette noticed what happened and took off running to assist picking the patient up.”
- **Chris Herman** – “The patient came in on a walk-in appt. with very serious issues. With Herman's help he was able to get the medication needed, get transportation, talk to the family all in that walk in visit. Herman is great with all his patients. Treats each one with respect, make them feel important. Thank you for your service for our country. Wonderful. - He is so wonderful with all his patients. Very committed to their well-being. He also involves the family in on the care of the vet to help the healing process. And often other NP, nurses & doctor come to get Chris input on things concerning patient, meds & news in the medical field.”
- **Parvataneni** - Care Team C – “She works well with the patient one on one. A new patient came in on the wrong time slot at the end of the day on a weekend Fri. but Dr. Parvataneni made sure that she listened to the vet and cared for his needs appropriately. All that he needed even if it took her until 5 pm to finish. But want to make sure he would be OK and our new vet go in 1 pm slots because of the care we need to give them - Works with the patient closely. Tries to make sure every vet gets all that they need as in consult to another dept., medication, procedure and benefits. Committed to helping each and every vet.”
- **Jacqueline Ellis** - Switchboard Operator – “Per the Metcalf family, I received a voice mail message complimenting her doing a ‘superb job... takes time to listen to my concerns...great customer service...exceptional employee who should be recognized.”
- **Paul Miller** - Patient Advocate – “He is the same all the time. Polite, helpful, professional & very nice! - Always very professional & goes out of his way to help patients & visitors with a smile.”



NOTE: To preserve the integrity of this effort, all submitted comments were reprinted as-is.